

Parents have a powerful voice in their teen's lives

Parental Guide to hosting responsible teen parties



Our Story...

*Please be a responsible parent – do not allow your teen to drink alcohol.
If you do, you may be the next mom or dad writing Our Story...*

My name is Amanda Hill; this is the poem I wrote to a Hanover Judge on August 10, 1998 who sentenced the person that killed my brother in a drunk driving accident.

I guess it was his time to go
We all loved him so

His mom, dad and sister too
But it's something that happens
to everyone even you
Cried till our faces turned blue

We miss him to this day
But we have to move on in the best way

In the end, we'll be together again
I know he's watching over us,
Day by day, from dawn till dust

But one day we'll see his smiling face,
In a beautiful happy place

Dear Concerned Parents,

I miss my Dad. He was killed by a drunk driver who crossed a 15-foot wide, raised median and drove 1,500 feet in the wrong direction, before hitting my father's car head-on at 55MPH. It was dark and the drunk, whose blood alcohol content was 2.5 times the legal limit, was so incoherent that he did not realize that his headlights were not on. My father never had a chance.

The pain of losing a loved one to a drunk driver is unimaginable. The loss is shocking and immediate. There is no time to say goodbye. The crash was violent so I worry about whether my father suffered or even knew what had happened. Because of one man's irresponsible behavior, there is a huge void in my life and that of my family – one that will last for a lifetime. All of this pain and suffering is without reason. Drunk driving deaths do not have to happen. If people could only learn to use alcohol responsibly, never allow kids to drink and never drink and drive, so many innocent lives would be saved.

Be a responsible parent, do not allow your teen to drink alcohol, it could save their life.

Charles P. Moncure, Jr.
Richmond, VA

Straight Talk

Despite the fact that it is illegal for teenagers to drink, alcohol remains the most widely used drug among youth. Alcohol use among teens has been steadily rising since the early 1990s. Over 2,000 teenagers between 16 and 20 years of age die every year in alcohol-related car crashes.

(NIAAA, 2002)

What Every Parent Needs to Know...

...before hosting a non-alcoholic party for their teen in Virginia

Know the law!

Some parents feel it is their right to provide alcohol to minors in the comfort and privacy of their home. However, it is illegal! Violators can be charged with a **Class 1 Misdemeanor, which carries a fine of \$2,500 and/or up to one year in jail.**

Virginia law recognizes the parents' liability for negligence if alcohol is provided to a minor who causes injury to another or him/herself. You have civil liability (meaning you can be sued to pay damages) if a partygoer is hurt or a third-party is injured.

Parents may be held responsible if a teen, as a result of alcohol use in their home:

- gets into a fight and hurts someone or themselves;
- falls and hurts him/herself or someone else;
- sexually assaults someone;
- damages property;
- dies from drinking too much;
- injures or kills someone while driving after leaving the party.

Did You Know?

- 2.6 million teenagers did not know you could die from an overdose of alcohol.
- 56% of students in grades 5 to 12 say that alcohol advertising encourages them to drink.

(MADD, 2002)

+ Hosting

When you or your teen throws a party...

Make it a great party by planning for everything...

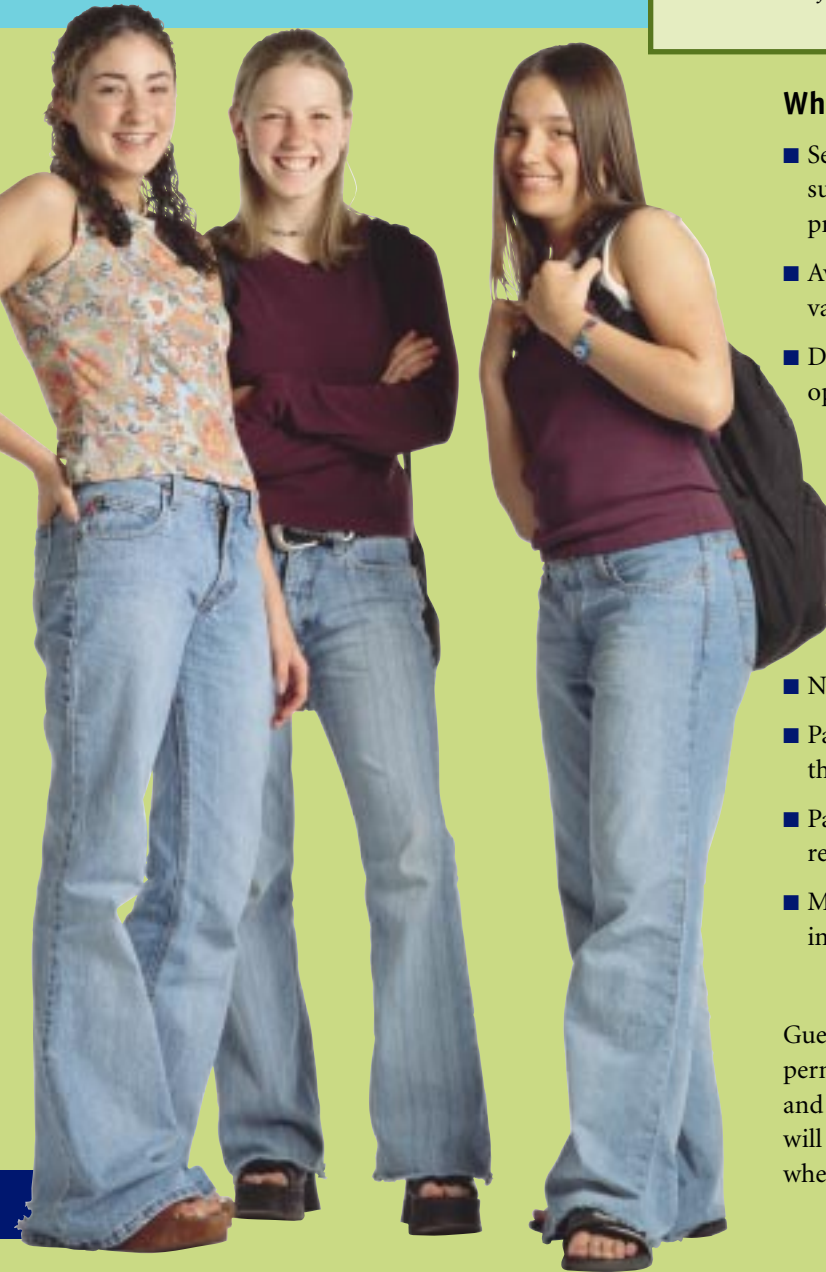
- Decide on a guest list. Give your teen a maximum number to invite and set an age limit for guests. Make sure to keep a copy of the guest list for your records.
- Send invitations! Have your teen inform his/her guest that the party is by invitation only.
- Set a party time, inclusive of a start and end time.
- Inform parents/guardians about the party and explain your expectations of partygoers. No Alcohol!
- Have parents or responsible adults drop-off and pickup teens. If teens drive to the party, plan to hold all keys to eliminate the temptation of leaving and returning to the party.
- Stay at the party. Your presence is important. Walk through the party area frequently. Have additional adult supervision onsite during the party.
- Ask all uninvited guests to leave immediately. If necessary, call the police to escort unwanted guests out.
- If you suspect a teen guest is intoxicated, contact his or her parents/guardians immediately.
- Have guests remain in the party location; do not allow teens to go back and forth to a parking lot or their car.
- Hold the party in an area you can monitor party guests from inside and outside.
- Watch for strange behavior. Pay attention if a guest frequents the bathroom after getting a drink. This could indicate the use of illegal substances or alcohol.



Did You Know?

- Teenagers who drink are *50 times* more likely to use cocaine.
- *Three out of five* teens have had an alcoholic drink in the past month.

(NIAAA, 2002)



What's on the menu?

- Serve a wide variety of foods that appeal to teens, such as sugary pastries, healthy fruit, vegetable trays, pretzels and chips and dip.
- Avoid serving punch or soft drinks in cups. Serve a variety of drinks in cans or bottles.
- Do not allow teens to bring outside drinks, cups or open bottles into the party.

Establish rules ahead of time

- No drugs or alcohol
- No smoking
- No leaving the party & returning
- No uninvited guests
- Party area should have ample lighting for the time of the day; keep lights on throughout the party
- Parent(s) will be providing supervision by serving refreshments, etc.
- Make some rooms in your home off limits to guests; insist on partygoers staying in designated party areas

Guests should not leave the house and return without permission and adult supervision. Avoid combining adult and youth parties. Remember adults are role models, teens will get the message that alcohol is not the “life of a party” when no alcohol is present at the party.

K Know the Facts

...before you send your teen out to party



If you are a parent of a high school student, soon your teen will be experiencing three of the most anticipated events in his or her life: spring break, prom and graduation. Most teens will celebrate by attending a party with their friends. Before you send your teen out to celebrate, be prepared for what they may encounter before they return to the safety and comfort of your home.

Things to know when your teen is a guest at a party

- Before giving consent for your teen to attend, call the adult host to confirm party location, time and whether alcohol is being served.
- If you do not know the host parent or on-site designated adult, take the time to introduce yourself. Get to know the parents of your teen's friends. Make sure they share your expectations of drug and alcohol-free parties. Make sure your teen knows that you will be checking with the parents of any other teen who is hosting a party. Don't trust that other parents will have the same "no-use" expectations as you.
- Confirm that no alcohol will be served and adult supervision will be on-site. Make sure that the parent is trustworthy; mention that you may be stopping by to check on how the party is going. It is unfortunate, but **NOT ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS CAN BE TRUSTED** with your teen's safety and well-being.
- Discuss drop-off and pickup expectations with your teen. Make sure your teen has money or a cell phone for an emergency phone call. Be sure your teen knows who to call.
- Make it easy for your teen to leave a party if there are drugs/alcohol. Make arrangements for them to call you or another trusted adult if they need to be picked up. Emphasize they should never ride home with **any** driver who has been drinking.
- Discuss with your teen the dangers of drinking and driving or riding in a car with an impaired person. Even though alcohol is not supposed to be served at the party, there is no guarantee that a party guest will not try to sneak alcohol in.
- Stay up and greet your teen when they return home. This lets your teen know you care and are paying attention to what they are doing.
- Be clear about consequences (in advance) if your teen chooses to drink alcohol.

Did You Know?

- Although a majority of parents believe peer pressure to be the primary reason teens drink or use drugs, teens say:

- 79% – being drunk/high feels good
- 67% – helps to forget problems
- 66% – others do it (peer pressure)
- 47% – nothing else to do

(MADD, 2002)

Straight Talk

Did you know that most of the alcohol used by youth under the age of 21 is either taken from the home of the parents or given to them by an older sibling?

(NIAAA, 2002)

Straight Talk

Be specific when setting rules. Make sure your teen knows their home non-alcohol policy and that it is in effect at all times.

Adults and teens have dramatically different social habits when it comes to drinking alcohol. Teens are more likely to drink alcohol in cars with 3 to 5 passengers between the hours of 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. and are more likely to be “cruising” and driving too fast.

(Virginia DMV, 2003)

Spring Break! Beach Parties!

Things to remember before you send your teen to the beach or on a spring break vacation

- Do not send your teen to the beach without adult supervision. Send your teen with a group of friends and at least one adult that you have met and trust.
- Write down the hotel name, address, phone number and the contact information for the adult accompanying the teens.
- Prepare a list of emergency numbers such as the police departments, hospitals, and other such emergency contacts for your teen to carry with them. Include phone numbers of family or friends for emergencies. Keep a copy for your home records.
- Have your teen keep a list of phone numbers to call in case your teen’s credit cards or traveler’s checks are lost or stolen, as well as the traveler’s check numbers.
- Include an emergency/safety kit containing things such as aspirin, bandages, disinfectants, cold compress and sun block.
- There’s safety in numbers. Talk to your teen about staying close to his/her friends. Three or more people watching out for each other are better than one.
- Talk to your teen before the trip about the dangers of drinking and drinking and driving.

Going out of town

Before you go out of town and leave a teen alone or in charge, consider the following:

- Can your teen handle the responsibility?
- Make it clear that throwing a party is not an option!
- Ask a trusted adult such as a close neighbor to check on your teen and your home while you are gone.
- Be clear about consequences (in advance) if your teen chooses to have a party while you are gone.

P Parent Power

Research shows that parents have a powerful voice in their teen's lives and decisions. Teens who say their parents strongly disapprove of underage drinking are less likely to use alcohol.



Did You Know?

- Two-thirds of teens that start drinking by age 15 will end up trying illegal drugs.

(NIAAA, 2002)

P Prevention Strategies for Parents

Maintaining open lines of communication is the single most important thing you can do to prevent your teen from using alcohol and other drugs. But it isn't enough!

Stay active and involved

- Know your teens friends and favorite hangouts
- Know the parents/guardians of your teens' friends
- Keep track of and support your teens' participation in school and community activities
- Do not allow any unchaperoned parties or other gatherings in your home
- Monitor alcohol use by adults in your home
- If you keep alcohol in your home, keep track of the supply

Tips

- Establish healthy beliefs and set clear standards
- Encourage healthy, creative activities
- Help your teen develop strong values
- Create a comfortable and supportive atmosphere at home
- Value your teens opinions and feelings
- Be a good role model in your own use of alcohol

Set curfews

The following curfews are recommended for Friday and Saturday nights for parties, dates and other planned activities.

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 7th Grade – 10:00 p.m. | 10th Grade – 11:30 p.m. |
| 8th Grade – 10:30 p.m. | 11th Grade – 12:00 a.m. |
| 9th Grade – 11:00 p.m. | 12th Grade – 12:00 a.m. |

(Parents Empowered to Save Teens, 1999)

If your teen holds a learners permit or driver license under age 18 in Virginia the following curfew restrictions apply by law, effective July 1, 2003.

Virginia's curfew laws prohibit drivers under age 18 who hold a learner's permit or driver's license from driving midnight to 4 a.m. If you hold a driver's license, you may drive during these hours:

- in the case of an emergency;
- when traveling to and from work- or a school-sponsored event;
- when accompanied by a parent or other adult acting in place of a parent;
- when responding to an emergency call by volunteer firefighter and rescue squad personnel.

Teen drivers are restricted to the number of passengers under age 18 traveling in vehicle, effective July 1, 2003.

If you are under age 18, you may carry only one passenger during the first year that you hold your driver's license. After you have held your license for one year, you may carry only three passengers until you reach age 18. Learner's permit holders may not carry more than one passenger under age 18. Passenger restrictions do not apply to family members. For more information please visit the DMV Web site at www.dmvnow.com.

Send a Clear Message

It's All About What You Say or Don't Say

You may not want to embarrass or alienate your teen by discussing the issue of underage drinking. But drinking and driving is only one of the many problems associated with illegal underage alcohol use. Other potential problems are unplanned sexual activity, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol poisoning, and sexual assault. Before sending your teen out to a party, talk to him or her about the consequences of using alcohol while underage. It is far better to be safe than sorry.

- Be prepared to talk about the issue of underage drinking. Take some time to really think about what you want to say and key points to go over with your teen. Anticipate how your teen might respond to your questions. Remember teens do not want a lecture. You do not need to cover everything at once. This should be an ongoing conversation with your teen throughout adolescence.
- Send a clear message that underage alcohol use is not accepted in your home.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Have your teen practice saying “no” to illegal activities. Discuss ways to get out of uncomfortable situations. Help your teen think of ways to respond when they are offered alcohol. For example, “No, I don’t want a beer, I have to stay in shape for my team.” or, “Nah, I’d rather have a soda” or just say, “no thanks”.
- Listen to your teen. When you listen, you create a safe environment where your teen will feel comfortable talking with you about his or her concerns.
- Set firm rules. Make it clear that drinking is illegal under any circumstances until they are over the age of 21. Discuss what the consequences will be if they choose to drink, (i.e., loss of car privileges, phone, dating, computer and misdemeanor charge if caught).
- Be alert for possible signs of alcohol use. Watch for problems like dropping grades, withdrawal, missing money, or a new set of questionable friends.
- Remind your teen of Virginia’s “You Use, You Lose” law. If he/she uses, buys or possesses alcohol or drugs, he/she can lose their driver’s license or learner’s permit for at least six months.

Did You Know?

- 33% of nearly 200,000 students nationally surveyed said that their parents often do not set clear rules.

(MADD, 2002)

- A study of 9th grade students from four urban high schools showed that the best predictor of risky sexual behavior was alcohol and/or drug use.

- Teenagers who drink are *22 times more likely* to use marijuana.

- The average age when a teen tries alcohol for the *first time is age 11*.

(NIAAA, 2002)

Key Points to Mention



- Don't drink alcohol or use other drugs
- Stay away from teens who do use alcohol or other drugs
- Don't feel pressured to use alcohol or other drugs; saying "No" is O.K.
- Leave the party if it is unsafe because drinking or drug use is happening
- Refuse to ride with friends who have been drinking, even if they act sober

Did You Know?

- Approximately two-thirds of teens that drink report they can buy their own alcohol.
- 35% of children in the 4th grade report having been pressured by their classmates to drink; by the time they reach 6th grade, 49% have been pressured.
- Of the 20 million junior and senior high school students in America, half drink once a month.

(MADD, 2002)



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